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Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-11 ISO-00 DHA-02 H-02 SCA-01 VO-03

INSE-00 AID-05 SS-15 NSC-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 /054 W
---------- 116621
O R 090853Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8059
INFO AMCONSUL UDORN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 2794

FOR ORM, EA AND H

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: EXPANDED INDOCHINESE REFUGEE PROGRAM: INFORMATION FOR CONSULTATIONS.

REF: A) STATE 028579 (NOTAL) B) STATE 029797 (NOTAL)

1. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WILL HOPEFULLY BE USEFUL IN UNDERSTANDING THE MAGNITUDE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN THAILAND. BEFORE REPLYING TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED IN REFTELS, YOU SHOULD NOTE THAT BASED ON OFFICIAL THAI STATISTICS AS OF JANUARY 30 THERE ARE OVER 80,000 REFUGEES IN CAMPS IN THAILAND:

LAO 57,534 (INCLUDES ABOUT 50,000 MEO)

KHMER 18,634

VIETNAMESE 4,299

TOTAL 80,467
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IN ADDITION, THERE ARE SEVERAL THOUSAND REFUGEES NOT RESIDING IN OFFICIAL CAMPS WHICH BRINGS THE TOTAL REFUGEE POPULATION IN THAILAND TO ABOUT 85,000.

2. DESIRE OF REFUGEES TO GO TO THE US - WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE LARGELY UNSCREENED MEO ELEMENT, MOST OF THE REGISTERED REFUGEES HAVE EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR COMING TO THE US. THE ONLY OTHER COUNTRY REQUESTED IN A SIGIFICANT NUMBER OF CASES IS FRANCE. THE UNHCR HAS REGISTERED 18,471 REFUGEES (ABOUT 6,839 PRINCIPAL APPLICANTS) IN THAILAND. THE UNHCR CONFIRMS TO US THAT THE VAST MAJORITY HAVE LISTED THE US AS THE FIRST COUNTRY OF PREFERENCE. THE UNHCR HAS STILL TO REGISTER A FAIRLY SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF THE NON-MEO CASELOAD. TOTAL REGISTRATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO CLIMB TO ABOUT 25,000 AS SOON AS REGISTRATIONS CAN BE ARRANGED. EVEN THESE REGISTRATIONS WILL EXCLUDE A CERTAIN PROPORTION OF REFUGEES LIVING OUTSIDE THE CAMPS. THE UNHCR HAS BEEN REGISTERING ONLY A SMALL NUMBER OF MEO WHO APPEAR TO MEET FOREIGN IMMIGRATION CRITERIA.

3. NUMBER OF REFUGEES WHO HAVE REGISTERED WITH EMBASSY, REFUGEE SECTION- THE EMBASSY HAS REGISTERED OVER 15,000 REFUGEES. AS ALREADY INDICATED, REFUGEES WHO WANT TO COME TO THE US FORM A LARGER GROUP THAN THOSE WHO HAVE ACTUALLY REGISTERED WITH US. IN ANY EVENT, WE DO NOT COMPILE RAW REGISTRATION STATISTICS PER SE BUT MAINTAIN STATISTICS ONLY ON THOSE REFUGEES REGISTERED WITH EMBASSY WHO APPEAR TO MEET US PAROLE CRITERIA. AS WITH THE UNHCR, EMBASSY STATISTICS DO NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE MEO AS A GROUP BUT HAVE FOCUSED ON ABOUT 2,000 MEO WHO WOULD APPEAR ELIGIBLE FOR AN EXPANDED PAROLE PROGRAM. THESE FIGURES ARE SUBSUMED UNDER THE LAO FIGURES BELOW IN PARA B.

B. REFUGEES WHO APPEAR ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE - OF REFUGEES WHO HAVE REGISTERED WITH EMBASSY AND APPEAR ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE, THE FOLLOWING IS BREAKOUT BY NATIONALITY AND PAROLE CATEGORY OF PRINCIPAL APPLICANTS/FAMILY MEMBERS. THE STATISTICS BELOW REPRESENT MOST ACCURATE AVAILABLE ESTIMATES AND WILL INCREASE SOMEWHAT AS NEW REFUGEES, PARTICULARLY LAO, REGISTER WITH EMBASSY:

- REPRESENTS EQUAL SIGN.
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	LAO #	KHMER	VIETNAMES##	TOTAL (BY CAT)
CAT I	80/337	130/924	252/787	462/2048-2510
CAT II	86/300	4/22	57/296	147/618-765

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CAT III 708/3233 576/2106 121/628 1405/5967-7372

(A) (454/2279) (38/58) (47/288) (539/2625-3164)

B) (139/658) (514/1966) (39/193) (692/2847-3539)

C) (115/296) (24/52) (35/147) (174/495-669)

TOTAL 874/3870-4744 710/3052-3762 430/1711-2141 2014/8633-10,647
(BY NATIONALITY)

UNDER CATEGORY III:

A) REPRESENTS REFUGEES ASSOCIATED WITH THE US.

B) REPRESENTS REFUGEES ASSOCIATED WITH FORMER GOVERNMENTS.

C) REPRESENTS REFUGEES ON HIGH PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT.

INCLUDES 2,000 MEO

INCLUDES 670 THAI DAM

ADDITIONALLY, THERE ARE ABOUT 2582 REFUGEES WITH MORE DISTANT RELATIVES IN THE US AND WHO, THEREFORE, DO NOT FALL INTO CAT I. WE ASSUME THAT AT LEAST PART OF THIS GROUP WILL COMPRISE AN ADDITIONAL PAROLE CATEGORY.

4. THE ABOVE PROJECTION INDICATES THE PRESSURE WE FACE AGAI ST THE LIKELY NUMBER OF PAROLE SPACES AVAILABLE FOR THAILAND SHOULD EXTENDED PAROLE BE APPROVED BY CONGRESS. EVEN UNDER AN EXTENDED PROGRAM, WE WILL HAVE TO PARE DOWN FROM THE ELIGIBLE POOL TO THE NEW QUOTA AND ALSO CRANK IN THE STRONGER CANDIDATES FROM CONFIDENTIAL

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AMONG NEW REGISTRATIONS OVER THE NEXT MONTHS. THE LAO REFUGEE INCREASE OF ABOUT 1,000 REFLECTS THE CONTINUED FLOW FROM LAOS AS WELL AS REGISTRATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE OUR LAST ESTIMATE AS OF JANUARY 1.ED FLOW FROM LAOS AS WELL AS REGISTRATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE SINCE OUR LAST ESTIMATE AS OF JANUARY 1. THERE WILL BE FURTHER INCREASES IN ELIGIBLE LAO CONSIDERING THAT FLOW FROM LAOS CONTINUES. AMONG THE KHMER AND LAO, THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT INCREASES AMONG REFUGEES WITH RELATIVES IN THE US (CATEGORY 1). IN MOST CASES, CATEGORY II REFUGEES WERE PAROLED PRIOR TO OCTOBER 31 (IN THE CASE OF VIETNAMESE OR CAMBODIAN) OR IN THE CASE OF THE LAO, MOST ARE INCLUDED IN THE CURRENT LAO PAROLE PROGRAM.

5. WITH REGARD TO CATEGORY III, OR SO-CALLED HIGH RISK REFUGEES IN THE SENSE OF A REFUGEE FACING PERSECUTION IN HIS HOMELAND,

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IT SHOULD BE NOTED CLEARLY THAT THE INDOCHINA REFUGEES ALL HAVE A VERY REAL FEAR OF PERSECTUION, EVEN EXECUTION, SHOULD THEY BE RETURNED TO THEIR HOMELAND. OUR SO-CALLED HIGH RISK CATEGORY COMPRISES REFUGEES WHO FIT US DEFINED MILITARY, POLITICAL OR CULTURAL CRITERIA; BUT REFUGEES EVEN OF THE FARMER CLASS HAVE EXPRESSED THE DEEP CONVICTION THAT THEY CANNOT RETURN TO THEIR HOMELAND WITHOUT FACING DIRE CONSEQUENCES.

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INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-11 ISO-00 DHA-02 H-02 SCA-01 VO-03

INSE-00 AID-05 SS-15 NSC-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 /054 W
---------- 116888
O R 090853Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8060
INFO AMCONSUL UDORN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY VIENTAINE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 2794

FOR ORM, EA AND H

6. THIRD COUNTRY EFFORTS:

A. THIRD COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT EFFORTS TO DATE - REFTEL B RAISES A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE OF THIRD COUNTRIES ACCEPTING REFUGEES FROM THAILAND. IT MAY BE USEFUL FOR YOU TO HAVE THE LATEST UNHCR STATISTICS ON INDOCHINA REFUGEES WHO HAVE ALREADY LEFT THAILAND FOR THIRD COUNTRIES:

AUSTRALIA 5

AUSTRIA 88

BELGIUM 13

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CANADA 503
FRANCE 3,938 (DOES NOT INCLUDE HUNDREDS OF LAO
WHO FLED TO FRANCE ON LAO PASS-
PORTS PRIOR TO ESTABLISHMENT OF
LAO DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC
IN DEC 75).

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GERMANY 1

ITALY 46

MALAYSIA 1,208

JAPAN 5

NEW ZEALAND 2

NORWAY 87

PHILIPPINES 4

TOTAL 5,900 (THIS COMPARED TO ABOUT 7,500
REFUGEES TAKEN FROM THAILAND
BY THE US)

B. REFUGEES DESIRING TO GO TO THIRD COUNTRIES - ALMOST ALL LAO, KHMER AND VIETNAMESE REFUGEES DESIRE TO LEAVE THAILAND. THE COUNTRIES THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH ARE, IN ALMOST ALL CASES, THE TWO PAST FOREIGN PRESENCES IN INDOCHINA, FRANCE AND THE US, WITH THE VAST MAJORITY PUTTING THE US DOWN AS FIRST CHOICE, GENERALLY, FOLLOWED BY FRANCE AND THEN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING: AUSTRALIA, CANADA OR GERMANY. THE UNHCR DOES NOT MAINTAIN A RUNNING COUNT OF REFUGEE PREFERENCES AND SUCH A CASE BY CASE COUNT WOULD BE TIME CONSUMING AND RATHER UNPRODUCTIVE, SINCE THE CENTRAL QUESTION IS NOT ONE OF REFUGEE PREFRENCES BUT RATHER OF THIRD COUNTRY ACCEPTANCE POLICIES. IN PRACTICE, THE UNHCR REFERS THE CASES OF REFUGEES EXPRESSING INTEREST IN A THIRD COUNTRY TO THAT NATION'S EMBASSY IN BANGKOK.

C. PROJECTED THIRD COUNTRY ACCEPTANCE OF INDOCHINA REFUGEES-
1) FRANCE - THE MAJOR CONTINUING REFUGEE EFFORT IS THE FRENCH PROGRA. IN PRINCIPLE, THE FRENCH WILL CONTINUE, AT LEAST THROUGH JUNE, TO ACCEPT REFUGEES AT THE RATE OF 600 A MONTH. THE TOTAL FOR JANUARY IS SOMEWHAT LESS THAN 600. HOW-EVER, THE UNHCR DOES NOT BELIEVE THIS REPRESENTA A PERMANENT DOWNTURN IN THE RATE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN FRANCE.

2) AUSTRALIA - THE AUSTRALIANS WILL BE TAKING 500

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REFUGEES FROM THAILAND GIVING PRIORITY TO THOSE WITH RELATIVES
IN AUSTRALIA OR ASSOCIATIONS WITH AUSTRALIAN PROGRAMS.

3) GERMANY- GERMANY HAS A QUOTA OF 700, NOT ALL OF
WHO WILL COME FROM THAILAND. THE PROGRAM APPEARS TO ENCOMPASS
ONLY VIETNAMESE REFUGEES FROM VIETNAM AND THE CRITERIA APPEAR
TO BE EXTREMELY RESTRICTIVE.

4) AUSTRIA-- WILL TAKE ABOUT 25 ADDITIONAL REFUGEES.

5) MALAYSIA -- THERE MAY BE 1,000 ADDITIONAL REFUGEES ACCEPTED
BY MALAYSIA IF THEY ARE MOSLEMS WHO DESIRE TO GO THERE. IT IS
UNLIKELY THAT MANY REFUGEES WILL MEET THIS STANDARD.

D. ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL VOLAGS IN THIRD COUNTRY RESETTLEMENT--
DOMESTIC VOLAGS IN FRANCE ARE SAID TO BE HELPFUL IN PLAYING A
RESETTLEMENT ROLE FOR REFUGEES SETTLING THERE. WE ARE NOT
AWARE, FROM THE BANGKOK END, OF ANY DOMESTIC OR INTERNATIONAL
VOLAG EFFORTS WHICH MAY BE UNDERWAY IN OTHER COUNTRIES CITED
ABOVE OR OF VOLAG EFFORTS TO INTEREST THOSE COUNTRIES OR
ADDITIONAL COUNTRIES IN RESETTLEMENT OF INDOCHINA REFUGEES
NOW IN THAILAND.

7. RESETTLEMENT IN THAILAND--RTG POLICY IS TO MAINTAIN THE
REFUGEES IN CAMPS. A NUMBER ARE BEING RELOCATED TO BETTER
FACILITIES, AND SOME EXISTING CAMPS HAVE BEEN IMPROVED. THERE
HAS BEEN NO CONCRETE MOVEMENT OF ANY KIND TOWARD PERMANENT
RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN THAILAND. INCREASINGLY, THE RTG
HAS SHOWN SIGNS OF FEELING OVERWHELMENED BY REFUGEES THEY DID
NOT GENERATE, AND THE PREVAILING THIA VIEW IS THAT THE BEST
DEFENSE IS TO KEEP CONDITIONS FOR REFUGEES IN THAILAND AT THE
SUBSISTENCE LEVEL AND PREVENT THE REFUGEES FROM RESETTLING
PERMANENLY IN ORDER TO AVOID ENCOURAGING THOUSANDS OF OTHERS
IN LAOS, CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM FROM FLEEING TO THE GREENER
PASTURES OF THAILAND. THE RTG IS ALSO CONCERNED THAT IF IT
IMPROVES CONDITIONS FOR REFUGEES, EVEN ITS PRESENT POLICY OF
ADMITTING THEM COULD BECOME A DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE PARTIC-
ULARLY DURING THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN NOW GETTING UNDERWAY.
THERE HAS ALREADY BEEN A GOOD DEAL OF COMPLAINT LOCALLY THAT THE
REFUGEES ARE TREATED BETTER THAN THE POORER THAI. THE THAI ALSO
HAVE TO DEAL WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS AND ARE INFLUENCED BY THE
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ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF LAOS AND CAMBODIA TOWARD THAILAND'S

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ACCEPTANCE OF PEOPLE FLEEING FROM THE JURSIDICTION OF THESE GOVERNMENTS.

8. FOR ALL OF THE ABOVE REASONS, THE THAI ARE BEGINNING TO SHOW SIGNS OF ADOPTING A STERNER REFUGEE POLICY. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL RECENT INSTANCES IN WHICH LAO REFUGEES WERE FORCIBLY RETURNED, AND THE RTG IS SAID TO BE MOVING TOWARD A POLICY OF PROVISIONING AND TURNING AWAY SMALL BOATS CARRYING REFUGEES FROM VIETNAM, UNLESS SOME THIRD COUNTRY GUARANTEES TO RESETTLE THE REFUGEES EXPEDITIOUSLY. THE RTG PLACES MOST OF ITS HOPE FOR SOLVING THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN RESETTLING SOME OF THE REFUGEES ABROAD AND IN WHAT SEEMS TO US THE RATHER UN-REALISTIC HOPE THAT THE REMAINDER WILL CHOOSE TO GO HOME IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE. TO THE EXTENT THAT THE U.S. AND THIRD COUNTRIES ARE ABLE TO TAKE ADDITIONAL REFUGEES FROM THAILAND, WE MAY SEE AN INCREASE IN THE RTG ABILITY TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE PROBLEM EVEN THOUGH PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT IN THAILAND IS A VERY LONG TERM PROSPECT.
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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 09 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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04 MAY 2006

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